

Construction of Family Identity through Consumption in Jinan, China

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Abstract

According to Epp and Price (2008), there is a limitation of the existing theory of the family identity that researchers study identity at the individual level and then they carry this individual level of identity to family instead of looking at family as a unit to understand how identities negotiated. However, that gap Epp and Price identified still has not been fully filled. Motivated by this gap and trying to understand it in a transitional society context, this study seeks to identify the formation of the family identity during the early stage of the family process which is the beginning of a family and how global and local forces influence identity formation. Based on Epp and Price (2008)'s framework of family identity, this study will make a unique empirical contribution in the Chinese context.

For the formation of family identity, we are going to look at how does self-identity and family identity manifest itself during the early stage of the family process? How are different identities created? Is family or self-identity repressed? Are new forms of identity created? And how family identity is constructed in a non-western context?

To better understand the relationship that exists between self-identity and family identity, we intend to use Epp and Price (2008)'s framework as a lens through which to better understand the interplay of identity that exists in families. We argue that the tensions that exist in the actions of consumption represent unique opportunities to better understand the expression and repression of different identity forms.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Family as a meaningful unit has long been accepted as playing a significant contribution to the study of consumers and consumption activities in consumer research. Each family has a unique collective identity depends on the social context of family life. However, family identity as well as individual identity is not immutable. It goes through many changes during the family life cycle. Since family activities, events and possessions through consumption, as patterned, structured and repetitive family activities, especially some of them with symbolic meaning, provides stability and continuity to the family. Adapt to change, maintain the soundness and counterpoise of the family, it is an optimum window for the study of both family identity and individual identity (Imber-Black, 1992; Moriarty & Wagner, 2004; Turner, 1967; Wolin & Bennett, 1984). In order to participate fully in these family activities and events, family members often devote much time and effort to purchasing of goods and services which are worthy of the study in consumer research (Rook, 1985). In addition, marketing literature has been interested in focusing on ways family identity is reflected and constructed through consumption practices for a long time (Price and Epp, 2005; Wallendorf and Arnould, 1991). Thus, Consumption practices and events, which is the enactment of family identity (Wolin & Bennett, 1984), is a special and vital vehicle to understand the construction, transition and development of family identity at any stage of the family life cycle.

Further, understanding family identity and family members' reactions in consumption can help to identify factors that influence the formation of the sense of who they are as a family. Thus, an exploratory study is proposed, to examine the factors which make up and shape the construction of family identity through consumption. Especially, how does self-identity and family identity manifest itself and how forms of identity created in a non-western context.

Chapter1.2: What is to be studied?

This thesis concentrates on the formation of family identity through the study of consumption behavior in Chinese family using Epp and Price's (2008) framework. The interplay of consumption and identity construction is eminent (Jantzen, Østergaard and Vieira, 2006). In addition, the role of consumption practices in individual identity construction process has long been studied in the Consumer Culture Theory (e.g. Ahuvia, 2005; Arnould and Thompson, 2005; Belk, 1988; Schouten, 1991; Rook, 1985; Wallendorf and Arnould, 1991, Lowrey and Otnes, 1994). However, less studies have constructed a family's identity as a unit through various negotiations of individual and group identities (Epp and Price 2008). My research will contribute to consumption theory by extending our understanding on Epp and Price's (2008) framework of family identity in Chinese context by understanding the interplay between individual identity and family identity. Furthermore, I am also interested in how individuals play a role in constructing the family identity, the gender issues in the family identity negotiation process, and, further, the specific factors that have influence on the formation of family identity in Chinese context.

Chapter1.3: Definition of terms

This study will adopt the following key terms: family, individual identity, family identity. Their definitions are as follows:

The Family

Inspired by sociology, anthropology, linguistic books and dictionaries, I propose that the definition of family includes four parts. The first one is the basic unite of the society from sociology structural aspect. The other three parts are the relation of the members are linked by kin or marriage; have common features and usually live together.

Although the definitions of family vary, but the key elements from the sociology, anthropology, linguistic books and dictionaries can be summarized to define it as a fundamental social group in society, include one or more people related by blood or marriage who share goals and values, have common beliefs, activities and long-term commitments to one another and reside usually in the same dwelling place (Marx and Engels, 1957; Rossi,2003; Luhmann,1982; Cheal, 1993; Crosbie-Burnett and Lewis, 1993).

According to the definition of family, most people are or going to be involved in and affect by two family identities in general. Those are the family they born and brought up in and the family they married in. In this thesis, I will call the family the couples were born the original family and the one formed through marriage the ‘new family’, and its identity ---“the new family identity”. In this thesis every time the phases ‘construction or formation of family identity’ used, it means the identity of the new family.

Individual Identity (Self)

Individual identity or self have been attempted to define from many perspectives since the word originated from the Rome language by scholars of sociology, psychology, advertising executives, deconstructionists, liberal reformers, advocates of multiculturalism and radical feminists, etc. It is a concept help us to map ourselves as an individual as well as in a group, including “who we are, who we were, who we’d like to become” (Mehtaand and Belk, 1991), what others think we are, what we think others are, what we think others think we are, what others think we think they are and so on (Jenkins, 1996). It includes personal identity (or called Self) and collective identity. Goffman (1963) suggests that personal identity is formed by two parts---his or her image from others’ mind and the quality of himself or herself which makes him unique like his faculty, character, experience and stories about him. Furthermore, personal identity is not isolated. It is interacted by the group identity which the individual belong to (Erikson, 1959). In consumer research, Belk (1988, 1989, 2005), who laid the foundations for the theories of self in consumer research in marketing, adopted the definition of the concept from sociology and psychology.

Family Identity

Synthesizing previous definitions from a literature review in psychology, family identity in this study are defined as: "Family identity is the family's subjective sense of its own continuity over time, its present situation, and its character. It is the gestalt of qualities and attributes that make it a particular family and that differentiate it from other families" (Bennett, Wolin and McAvity, 1988, p. 212). The detailed review of relevant definitions will appear in Chapter 2.

Chapter1.4: Why study the formation of family identity in China?

Chapter1.4.1 Why study the formation of family identity?

There are three reasons why the formation of family identity has become the main focus of this study. First of all, it provides a sense of stability and balance for family life especially when conflicts are aroused in family issue. Secondly, family identity is very important for the study of the interactions between couples' self identities in the early stage of the family. Besides, the influence of family identity for the formation of a person's identity is impossible to ignore based on many researches. So this research will provide an important rationale for the studies of the children in the family who will be the main consumer in china in the future. These are the three main reasons for the study of the construction of the sense of the family identity.

Firstly, identity is the 'cohesive device' of family (Gordon, 2004). In another word, the identity contributes to family's stability. Research have showed that today's couples are more likely to question and reformulate their commitment to each other because of the high expectations partners have of each other, the relaxation of social control and the improvement of personal well-being(Cigoli and Scabini, 2006). It is more easily than

before to have conflicts between them. However, family identity provide a sense of stability and balance when impact or some stressful events happen which disrupt the normal family life. Shared values, beliefs and meanings reduce ambiguity and uncertainty about a complex array of stimuli and make coordination of response among members possible. It is indispensable to family's definition of itself, but it does change over time.

Although family identity is changing constantly and may combining other elements and generations over time during the family life cycle, it is critical for the newlyweds to establish a shared identity successfully during the early phase of their marriage. According to Bennett, Wolin and McAvity (1988), couples who do not construct an effective sense of who they are at the early stage of their union may meet serious conflicts and reversals in later phases. If getting worse, it may cause an uncombined difference between members which will lead to the dissolution of the marriage. In order to save the partnership and keep the development of matrimony in a healthy way, we focus on the creation of family identity at the early stage in Chinese context.

Secondly, analyzing family identities in this stage provides an opportunity to examine the ways in which identities of the family is constitute by the ego identities of the two individuals and influenced by their family-of-origin through communication and negotiation between them and across generations. During the early phase of their union, the couple's experience from the families they were born may be carried over to the new one. During this period, identity is no explicit. As heritage and inheritance interacted with individual identity, the family identity is shaped by numerous of decision makings.

Thirdly, not only the family they formed will play the main role in the consumption in China, but also their child who will be influenced by the family identity they formed at the early stage. This research will provide an important rationale for the studies of their child in the future who will be the main consumer in china in the future. Researchers have found that only 96.8% people said they want to have child (Yu, 2007). They

expected that the best average childbearing age was 25.7 years (Yu, 2007). Furthermore, the higher education level they have, the later child-bearing age they expect (Yu, 2007). Significant relations were found between self-concept formation and family characteristics among young adults (Mullis, Brailsford, and Mullis, 2003). Therefore, the identity of their child will be influenced by the family identity initially created by the couples during the early stage of the couple's union, although family identity ripens in the course of the child-rearing years. And the child they are going to rear will be one of the most important consumers in Chinese market in the future. From this aspect, it is important to find the identity of the family on the first stage.

In conclusion, it is very important to study the family identity in order to better understand the relationships exists between self-identity and family identity and the development and formation of family identity. Three main reasons are that the identity contributes to family's stability; it is important for the research of the interplay between individuals and their identity from their original family, and their child will be influenced by the family identity initially created by the couple.

Chapter 1.4.2 Marriage in Family identity building

Marriage, as an interpersonal relationship plays a core part in family identity building. In this study, my focus will be the initial stage of formation of a family identity. All the processes constituting marriage life showed the transaction and formation of family identity (Ilhan and Sandikci, 2006; Otnes, 1998). Activities like gift giving, shopping, wedding ceremony, and leisure are examples. Through these practices, I can discover complex negotiation processes not only between the two individuals but also among the husband and wife's families including the individual, bundle, and family levels (Ilhan and Sandikci, 2006).

Hegel (1961) interpreted the basic meaning of family which is formed by three aspects which are listed in chronological order: marriage, properties & possessions and

children's education & family disintegration. In his opinion, marriage is the external part of the family concept and the concept of family is the spirit of marriage. Property and possession makes the family members tend to take care and gain for one group which is family. The idea that using the couples which mainly has married between one to four years as a time point to study the creation of family identity in China is adopted because it meet the first two forms of the family according to Hegel. Furthermore, the cohabitation rate in China is much less than western countries. According a report by the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences Institute for population and development, only a quarter of a spouse who has the experience of living together before marriage in Shanghai, China (Yu, 2011). The other forms at the early stages of a couples' marriage life is about property and possession. Couples will buy or get their necessities most of the property and possession during the wedding preparation time and at the early stage of their marriage life. Media have showed that from the majority of marriage documents in recent years, the woman is given a flat or as bridal-gift by the man and the property usually a new car she brings with her as dowry, also sometimes with furniture and household appliances (Zhang and Zhou, 2007). Therefore, the early marriage life of a couple in China is a good start point for the study of establishing of family identity.

From the perspective of family life cycle, young married couples are never failing to attract researchers in marketing. From family formation to dissolution, there is a series of typical stages that families go through. At each stage, individual and family have different needs and wants which creates opportunities for marketers to change and provide what will best suit their customers. There are eight stages in family life cycle, including 'bachelor, young married, full nest, single parent, divorced and alone, middle-aged and married, full nest again, and empty nest' (Folsom & Boulware, 2004, p.183). Folsom and Boulware discussed that the meaningfulness of a marketing research using family life cycle theory should look at customer groups based on their life stage instead of age or other demographic tools. Because new married couples are at a stage that many new choices and decisions should be made in a short period of time, it creates needs and opportunities for marketers. In conclusion, young married couples in their early marriage life are an attractive group to consumer researchers.

Transitions are inevitable through the various stages of family life because of the nature of it. For once consequential decision of marriage is taken, it will in some extent start to reshape the reflexive project of identity through the lifestyle consequences which ensue. Wedding as a fateful moment which we to mark the beginning of a family in law are transition point which not just for the identity of an individual and his or her future conduct but also for the family identity which they built up. In addition, the encounters which couples met during the preparation of the wedding helping to reconstitute the family identity, therefore expresses some of the central differences of self-identity and the families they born in between the couple.

Chapter1.4.3 Why China?

Family as a consuming, producing, distributing and socializing unit has long been studied by consumer researchers (Netting, Wilk and Arnould 1984). While family practices are historically and culturally located, they are at the same time interacting with other practices and elements of society (Morgan 1996). And also, the content of identities is different between cultures and changes over time (Belk, 1988). As different culture and background location, family identity and self identity would undergo different dramatic transformation, the investigation of it in the different culture context would be essential for consumer culture research. However the explorations on self and family identity in consumer research have been mainly focused on the western country. Thus, great diversity of experience of how identities of individual and families are formed and developed are devoted more relatively attention to understanding them.

This study will examine the construction of family identity though consumption in China. There three reasons made us chose China as the venue for enacting family to uncover the particulars of how individual and family identities are created, negotiated, affirmed and reinterpreted. It is a large consumption market with a rapid-growing consumption rate. And as a transitional society, there are many cultural tensions like

local-global, traditional-modern, and urban-rural exist.

Chapter 1.4.3.1 China as a large consumption market

The number of family and its consumption in China is growing rapidly. There are 8,113,600 pairs of couples every year in average registered with the office to get the marriage certificate in the last five years. Chinese Marriage Report in 2011 (Ministry of Civil Affairs & Baihe.com, 2012) shows not only the large numbers of couples got married every year, but also the large amount they spend is impressive. Although western culture has a large influence on Chinese culture because of socialization and globalization, a certain degree has remained. One of it is that most of the important possessions for a family were purchased including flat, car, appliance and furniture etc at the early stage of the family life cycle in China. As a result, the study of family identity at this stage will provide a cherished opportunity for the study of the construction of family identity in non-western culture (Bennett, Wolin and McAvity, 1988). It would be mutually beneficial for marketers, both in terms of sales facing young married couples and developing a more comprehensive marketing strategy.

China is one of the most attractive markets in consumption. Credit Suisse First Boston's forecast report expect that China's consumption market will replace the U.S. as the driving force for the global economy ten years later (Ling & Hai, 2005). China has become the world's third largest source of wealth, its family wealth have reached \$16.5 trillion, after the United States (54.6 trillion) and Japan (21.0 trillion), more than the richest countries in Europe, France (\$ 12.1 trillion) as much as 35 percent, almost equal to India (6.4)'s five times world (Ling & Hai, 2005). In 2004, Chinese family have spent \$704 billion on consumption worth of the in 2014 is likely to rise to \$ 3.726 trillion which is 11% of the whole world (Ling & Hai, 2005).

In addition, Compared with the elder generations in China which anchored in traditional Chinese values and operating from a holistic perspective in consumption, the young generation especially the only child generation who were born in 1980s. They, who

have reached the marriageable age (Wang, 2006), draws on a different consumption culture. Their characteristics as consumer are summarized in chapter 4.

Chapter 1.4.3.2 China as a transitional society

Today Chinese traditional culture and meet with global culture introduced through media, information technologies, and global companies (Ritzer, 2004). That is, being a transitional society, many cultural tensions like local-global, traditional-modern, and urban-rural exist. Role of consumption in resolving these tensions is identified at the individual level (Bonsu & Belk 2003; Zhou & Belk 2004, Harris and Cai 2002; Ihan and Sandikci, 2006). Epp (2008) pointed out the limitation of formation research in marketing which ignored to explore the family as a collective enterprise. Therefore, many cultural tensions like local-global, traditional-modern, and urban-rural exist.

Chapter 1.5: What is to be achieved?

The aim of this study is to better understand the relationship that exists between self-identity and family identity basing on Epp and Price (2008) and making unique empirical contribution in the Chinese context. Consumption practices and activities represent performances that create tensions between self and family identity. We intend to use Epp and Price's framework (2008) as a lens through which to better understand the interplay that exists between self and family identity in Chinese context. We argue that the tensions that exist within family consumption provide unique opportunities to better understand the expression and repression of different identity forms. The following questions will be answered by this research:

How does self-identity and family identity manifest itself through consumption practices?

How are different identities created?

Is family or self identity repressed?

Are new forms of identity created?

How family identity is constructed in a non-western context?

Chapter 2: Literature review

The notion of identity has played a critical role in consumer consumption over the last 25 years. Arguably, Belk's 1988 article on the role of possessions in creating/expressing self-identity represents the launch of research interest into theories of identity. We see how identity plays a key role in consumer self expression. This has led scholars to look at identity from context ranging from extended self to desired and undesired self. These scholars highlight that consumers are identity seeker who consume objects not only for the utility functions but also for the meaning to consumer themselves and their surroundings. However, a core limitation to these papers was their inability to account for more collective forms of identity.

Family identity seeks to address the short-comings of self-identity literature. Family or communal perspectives in identity argued the importance of them as central to many consumption experiences. This has led scholars to look at family identity in contexts ranging from individual's influence to communication forms within family members. These scholars highlight the vital importance of individual family members' decision role and the role of outsiders.

We have three core objectives within this section. First, we will highlight the major scholarship associates with self identity scholars. We categorize it into two core streams of literature extended self and the notion of desired/ undesired self. We note that possessions and experiences are two kinds of symbols of identity which are used by individuals for the purposes of self-creation, self-understanding and communicate self-relevant information to others. Scholars not only use experimental and survey-based

work explore issues related to the role of possessions, places, body, but also ‘consumers who engage in nostalgia, consumers who self-present by immersing themselves in myth or religion, and consumers who participate in fantasy-based consumption communities’ (Schau & Gilly, 2003, p387). Second, we will highlight the major scholarship associates with family identity scholars. We will present the major themes and sub-themes associated with this field of scholarship. Third, we will link these two threads of scholarship together to better highlight the role that self and family identity play together and how this helps us to better understand consumer behavior.

Chapter 2.1 Self Identity

The concept of self is originally rooted within sociology and psychology (Galvin, Carma and Bernard, 2004; Giddens, 1991; Goffman, 1959; Tajfel, 1981). Self builds on Goffman’s (1959) thesis of identity and social performance. Goffman’s proposition highlights the relationship between inner states of being that are expressed outwardly through performative acts. It helps us to map ourselves as an individual as unique by distinguishing from others and, as well as how we connects to others and social groups in affiliative relationships (Kleine, Kleine, and Allen 1995). It includes “who we are, who we were, who we’d like to become” (Mehta and Belk, 1991), what others think we are, what we think others are, what we think others think we are, what others think we think they are and so on (Jenkins, 1996). Goffman (1963) suggests that it is formed by two parts---his or her image from others’ mind and the quality of himself or herself which makes him unique like his faculty, character, experience and stories about him.

The study of identity plays an important part in the development of modern sociological thought. Starting from the works of Cooley and Mead (1970), identity studies have been paid attentions by sociological researchers and have been evolved and developed rapidly. In 1970s, Micro sociological perspectives focused on self-aspects dominated the literature (Cerulo, 1997). At that time researches are widely focused on an individual's sense of self by exploring the ways in which interpersonal interactions mold

and the formation of self. However, many works moved their concerns from the individual to the collective recently. In 1980, it has been developed widely in different area including systematic scrutiny of behavior, virtual identities and identity as a source of mobilization (Cerulo, 1997).

A close look toward the self identity scholarship can be divided into two core streams of literature: possessions and experiences. Scholars looking at possessions argue that the consumption of goods cannot be viewed through more traditional notions of exchange, utility and profit maximisation; goods become key components in the formation of identity and the expression of self. Examples include crucifixes, trophies, diplomas, and wedding rings provide a benefit that is primarily symbolic, serving to represent religious devotion, achievements, or a relationship, respectively.

One consistency in both of these streams of scholarship is rich qualitative data exploration looking into not only the role of possessions, places, body, but also consumers who engage in nostalgia, consumers who self-present by immersing. These two aspects are fundamental to understanding the concept of self, they do go far enough in helping us to better understand the linkage between self identity and collective identity. As a result, we see a robust stream of literature looking the relationship between self concept and how that is formed through collective participation. We categorize self identity scholarship into two core streams of literature (subthemes- which can largely be divided into two dominant streams of literature- the role of possessions and experiences in self identity. What follows is a summary of these two areas of scholarship.

Chapter 2.1.1 Possessions and the extend self

Scholars build upon some of the early work put forth by possession theorists and seek to capture consumer experiences that go beyond the possession of goods and into the realm of consumer fantasies and how consumers appropriate marketplace meanings

into the formation of self. Examples of it include consumers who engage in nostalgia (Davis 1979), consumers who self-present by immersing themselves in myth (Belk and Costa 1998) or religion (O'Guinn and Belk 1989), and consumers who participate in fantasy-based consumption communities (Kozinets 1997, 2001). The focus of this scholarship is how these participatory practices are key drivers in the formation of self identity.

The content of self identity is different between individual and cultures, and changes over time (Belk, 1988). In addition, Cushman's (1990) empty-self sees identity as 'consumer relentlessly feeds objects but which never fills up' (p172). He criticized that there is a problem has risen between consumers' continued desire for a coherent identity narrative and the significant absence of the support from social and cultural aspect for it.

Personal attributes, relationships, fantasies, possessions and other symbols of identity are used by individuals for the purposes of self-creation, self-understanding (Allport 1943; Belk 1988; Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981; James 1890; Markus and Nurius 1986; McCall 1987; Rogers 1951; Turner 1987) and communicate self-relevant information to others (Blumer 1969; Firth 1973; Hewitt 1976; Mead 1934). These explorations elevate the focus of studies around identity, self and consumption especially into consumption motives and practices. Since that time, experimental and survey-based work which explore issues related to the role of those symbols, like possessions, places (Belk, 1988; Tian and Belk, 2005), body (Belk and Ausstin 1986) and objects (Ahuvia, 2005) that consumers use to define themselves, become major topics.

By investigating the relationship between possessions and sense of self, the Belk sees consumers as possessing a core self which expand themselves by adding new stuff. 'The core self is expanded to include items that then become part of the extended self' (Ahuvia, 2005). For instance, Belk concluded that for those particular respondents the "body, internal processes, ideas, and experiences" are likely to be part of their core self, whereas 'persons, places, and things to which one feels attached' are more likely to be seen as part of their extended self, and items to which they do not feel attached are not

part of the self' (p 141). However, Ahuvia argued that this metaphor will make it more complicate when looking at phonemes. He found that 'love objects assist with symbolically demarcating the boundary between the self and identities that the consumer rejects' (Ahuvia, 2005). In other instances love objects with emotional power help to resolve the conflicts between the 'consumer's past identity versus the person the consumer wants to become, or the conflicts between ideals of who the consumer should be' (Ahuvia, 2005).

Russell W. Belk as pioneer who introduced the concept of extended self to the research of consumer behavior field has spurred the development of it and let to several investigations on the topic. As a leader in this field his contributions have significant influences in other consumer behaviour and marketing scholars (Ahuvia, 2005). One of the most important papers are his 'Possession and the Extended Self' (1988). The study focuses on raising the attention to the importance of possession as components to our sense of self. Possessions are the reflection of individual identity as they demonstrate a person's accomplishments, skills, tastes, or unique creative efforts (McCracken 1988a; Schultz, Kleine, and Kernan 1989). It is based on the premise that 'We are what we have', or 'We are the sum of our possessions' (Belk, 1988) which are essential for understanding consumer behaviour (Belk, 1988). By having and possessing things, we are trying to meet the requirement of our sense of self. A various of literature have been brought together by Belk(1988) as evidence to support that possessions are seen as part of self that consumers use key possessions to 'extend, expand, and strengthen' (Ahuvia,2005)their sense of self.

Although at that time Cohen has raised several objections to Belk's theory as lacking of 'meaning, empirical identification and explanatory power', Belk's response(1989) clarify the concept of extended self, discuss its measurement and comment on the theoretical significance of self extended for consumer research. He (1989, p. 130) emphasised the relationship between the self and the objects which is the subject's agency in merging identity with objects. Miller (1987) emphasised objects as active in subject formation which has been remained under-theorised before (Borgerson, 2005)

in consumer studies.

With the development of traditional forms of identity, there is an increasing desire of demarcating individual's identity from others. To choose from an abundance of competing frameworks of meaning, individuals can shape their own identity. One of the significant ways individuals construct their identity is through consumption (Bauman, 1991; Gergen, 1991; Giddens, 1991; Taylor, 1989). Consumer research has been put their central concerns on it through the 90s to the early 21st century. Firstly, Belk (1988)'s study forms a cornerstone on symbolic consumption. He brought and identified the terms such as 'self', 'sense of self', and 'identity' from sociology perspective into consumer research area which has been commonly used since. Mainly his focus is on possessions. Possessions have been chosen to construct, and communicate the meaning about self as to an individual and to others. Based on these studies, how individuals defining, extending, and strengthening their identities through consumption has been emerged extensively to different aspects associated with differentiation of the self from others. For example, integration of the self with others, the role of valued possessions, self-continuity, self-change, and self-coherence (e.g. Ahuvia, 2005; Belk, 1988; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Kleine, Kleine, & Allen, 1995; Myers, 1985; Schultz, Kleine, & Kernan, 1989; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988).

The reasons that researchers focus on symbolic possessions are stems from the emotional significance that they hold which are distinct from their objective utilitarian function for their owners or users (Belk, 1988, 1992; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Mehta & Belk, 1991). For example, wedding rings, trophies, religious objects, photos took in special occasion and diplomas. They are serving to represent a relationship, a memory, achievements, religious devotion etc. No matter the utilitarian purposes of the possessions, they can have significant symbolic meaning if they evoke special memories (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981).

Due to the complexity of establishing self-coherence, consumers' identity projects often involve identity conflicts. Specifically, it has determined by the variety, changeability

and multivariate nature of self-identity. The difficulties in establishing self-coherence can be summarized as: ‘fragmented multiple selves, the empty self, and the coherent sense of self created out of synthesis of opposite identities’ (Piacentini & Cui, 2012). Firat and Venkatesh (1995) discussed that consumers is not strongly committed to identities, they possesses fragmented multiple identities form a wide range without willing to reconcile contradictions and then discards these them with no hesitate. In this view, during the whole process they would not feel anxiety or uncertainty but rather enjoying it.

In contrast, Cushman (1990) argues that the contemporary consumer has the desire to construct a centered, authentic self which is a unified and coherent one. However it is difficult due to the ‘abundance of competing lifestyles and subcultures that lack shared meaning’ (p101). On the contrary, he believed that the consumer feels a sense of an ‘empty-self’. Specifically, consumers would never reach fulfillment. At the same time self-doubt and unworthiness feeling would accompanied during their ongoing consumption activities.

More studies discovered that customer lies in the middle of these two opposing opinions (eg. Gould and Lerman, 1998; Thompson and Hirschman 1995; Murray, 2002; Schau and Gilly, 2003; and Ahuvia, 2005). Consumers in these studies experienced difficulties in establishing a coherent identity but and yet did not experience an ‘empty-self’. They explored the use of consumption to flexibly incorporate a coherent identity within a disjointed society (Ahuvia, 2005). Ahuvia (2005) discussed how consumers in US deal with their identity conflicts through symbolic consumption. However consumers follow different strategies in different context and consumers in other cultures may deal differently. Because the formation of identity and consumption activities can not been developed without social and cultural support.

Chapter 2.1.1.1 Self Identity Transition

Due to the changeability of self identity, consumer researchers in marketing found out that the construction of extended self through symbolic consumption during liminal periods. For instance, Belk (1992) and Mehta and Belk (1991) have been put an insight in how the extended self is manipulated through during a geographic move. Other examples of the researches about symbolic consumption are cosmetic plastic surgery (Schouten, 1991) and self-gift purchases (Mick, DeMoss, & Faber, 1992). Furthermore, major life event such as marriage, divorce, the birth of a child, or college graduation are often marked by a significant change in one of an individual's important life roles. It signifies the new role of the individual and the helps he/ she complete the transition and redefined him/her self. In these life transitions, the customers pass through several incoherence stages (Schouten, 1991; V. Turner, 1969; Warner, 1959). Gennep (1960) described these phases as 'separation, liminality, and aggregation'. Based on this theory, the initial period striped and detached individual identity from a prior relationships and roles existing. The middle phase of the transitional process is the primary phase focused by many studies is in liminality. It is an ambiguous state as it has not acquired the attributes of a future stage after separated from previously role and social structure.

There are two roles that symbolic possessions play during transitional periods. First, a consumer's identity is defined, in part, by his or her personal relationships (James, 1890; McClelland, 1951). On one hand symbolic possessions keeps the one's former identity during life transitions once held in the individual's extended self, on the other hand it allows the part of former's identity transported to the new identity. For example, Belk (1992) described that when we move we must make choices about which objects to keep and which to get rid of. Those symbolic possessions could represent the relationship between individual and family, friends, or others. Furthermore, one may rely on symbols of past relationships to ease the transition to a new role. Under ideal circumstances, we would consider the importance of the role the possession full fill to define the individual or family identity when moving house. Once it has been kept and moved to the new place, it may transport part of one's former identity to be the new one. And for those possessions with less desirable memories would be selectively jettisoned. We expect that in those transitions that necessitate may be valued more

highly during liminal periods than during the contract periods.

Another function of symbolic possessions in transitional periods is that it helps and supports the establishment of a new identity by acquiring possessions symbolic of their new state (Vinsel, Brown, Altman, & Foss 1980). It would benefit group members during a liminal transition. (Boorstin, 1973; Solomon, 1986; Van Gennep, 1960). However individual may has relatively less adoption for symbols of the new role after the completion of the liminal transition.

In sum, possessions are an important part of the component of the extended self and play multiple roles during the transitional process. These include the establish and maintain the extended self (Belk, 1988), intact the value from the past (Belk, 1991), and facilitate the construction of a new identity (Bih, 1992; Joy & Dholakia, 1991; Mehta & Belk, 1991).

Chapter 2.1.1.2 Desired/ Undesired Self

Before Belk, Ger and Askegaard (1996), consumer desired has been trivially classified as needs or wants. It has seldom been mentioned in consumer behavior literature. Previous consumer research has identified that desires are “instead belief based passions that involve longing, yearning, and fervently wishing for something” (Belk, Ger and Askegaard, 1997). And desired and undesired selves play a significant role in symbolic consumption in different cultures (e.g. Ahuvia, 2005). When making a decision on purchase, they tend to choose the brand or product which has a relevant or communicative identity. “Consumption serves to produce a desired self through the images and styles conveyed through one’s possessions” (Thompson and Hirschman 1995, p. 151). The possessions and object which consumer purchased can be referred as self-defining and self-expressive carrier. These material objects or places are associated with the consumers through consumption.

The work on symbolic consumption confirms the role of products and lead to the desired and undesired self concept (Belk, 1988; Levy, 1959; Solomon, 1983; Wright, Claiborne, & Sirgy, 1992). There is a growing interest in the notions of the it within object in consumer behavior research. Desired and undesired self which are imagined selves can be positive or negative (Markus & Nurius, 1986). The role of products and services both in in approaching a desired self and avoid an undesired self-concept has been studied. (Banister & Hogg, 2001, 2003; Freitas, Davis, & Kim, 1997; Wilk, 1997). The dynamics which represent the interactions between desired and undesired plays a vital role in symbolic consumption.

However, the interplay between desired and undesired selves in consumption has seldom been studied. The strategies consumers used in handling the interaction between desired and undesired selves are examined by Ahuvia (2005) and Karanika and Hogg(2010) in recent years.

Chapter 2.1.1.3 Identity Conflicts

Since the publication of Belk (1988) proposed conceptualization of the self identity, the identity conflicts and their eventual resolution has never been ignored. No matter what conflicts it define, what the story is about, what issue or topic it is, researches has always been structured around it. For example, Thompson and Haytko (1997) and Murray (2002) found that young adults experience the conflicts between individuals and group identity and the attempt they used to resolve this tension (see also Fournier 1998).

There are three strategies in consumer research when reconcile identity conflicts, which are “demarcating,” “compromising,” and “synthesizing” (Ahuvia, 2005). A demarcating solution is clearly stick on one side and reject the other. When consumers are strongly preferred one identity over another, a demarcating solution would be used. It expresses the strongest part of consumers’ desired self especially from the products which has been rejected by the customer. The choice the customer made demarcate

and reinforce the boundary between his or her desired self and undesired self.

A compromising solution assumes the conflict has no sum area and to solve the problem. Both sides try to reach a middle ground point between the two identities. In compromising solution, consumers have to give up some of the attractive aspects of each identity. Miller (1998) suggested that customers experience a series of compromising solutions every day, but not about the things they have a strong desirable. The third way is believed to offer the consumer most or all of the advantages. It assumes the conflict between both sides has a sum area. The synthesizing solution is a novel resolution to form a new identity which possibly would offers advantages not considered previously” (Ahuvia, 2005).

Chapter 2.2 Family identity

Family identity is a special kind of collective identity which is a concept grounded in classic sociological constructs. Early studies were rooted in physiological traits, psychological predispositions, regional features, or the properties of structural locations. The notion addresses that a collective's members which has shared attributes are united to stress the similarities. Group members were believed to ‘internalize these qualities, suggesting a unified, singular social experience, a single canvas’ (Cerulo, 1997, p2) against outsiders to construct a sense of self.

We began our exploration of family identity with a focus on the history of family identity and its influence in the area of consumer research. Epp and Price (2008)’s study of how families enact their individual and collective identities will particularly depicted. At the end of this session how individual and family identities are negotiated and interacted with each other will be highlighted,

‘As families construct identity, they face competing interests and demands, increasingly elective and fluid interpersonal relationships, and blended family forms that depart from

prevailing ideals'(Epp,2008, p2). This session examined the development of family identity theory. Firstly, discussions in sociology are studied to uncover the foundation of literature. Then I provided fresh perspectives for examining how family identity theories are conducted in consumer research. Particularly Epp and Price (2004)'s study. Collectively, this paper drew from a variety of disciplinary to support the literature for consumer research specialists.

Although Hirsch's (1997) explanation of "familial gaze" in sociology build the notions in relation to what we think of as our family through photograph representations, the most comprehensive definition of family identity was first used in family therapy studies (Wolin and Bennett 1984; Blinn 1988; Whiteside 1989; Fletcher 2002) It is defined as "The family's subjective sense of its own continuity over time, its present situation, and its character. It is the gestalt of qualities and attributes that make it a particular family and that differentiate it from other families" (Bennett et al. 1988, p.212). They believed that it is "a group psychological phenomenon" based on a "shared belief systems", which are the implicit assumptions about roles, relationships, and values that govern interaction in families and other groups (Bennett et al. 1988, p.212). Bennett, Wolin and McAvity explained this systems were built on former studies on family themes (Handel, 1967), family rules (Jackson,1965; Riskin, 1963; Ford and Herrick,1974), family myths(Ferreira, 1966) and family constructs (Reiss,1871,1981). In 1980s, it started to appear in sociology (Bielby and Bielby, 1989), communication studies (Braithwaite, Baxter, and Harper 1998; Galvin 2003; Koenig Kellas 2003), and psychology (Bolea 2000; Fiese et al. 2002).

All of these studies provide a series of thoughtful discussions as the foundation of literature for consumer research specialists. Especially, in sociology, Bielby and Bielby (1989) base their theory of the process of identity formation on a concept that behaviors are a source of identity (Rosenfeld and Spenner, 1988). Thus, they believe that one's behavior in his family scope is a source to contribute to the establishment of his family identity and sense of self (Bielby and Bielby, 1989). In turn, family and self identity are also predisposes one to keep in a line of activity (Bielby and Bielby, 1989).

However, the importance of activities or performances are different from the attribute to the construction of identity. And intentions regarding behavior are formed with respect to an allocation of time and effort across activities (Safilios and Rothschild, 1971). Thus, understanding family identity formation requires attention to both one's behaviors and the distribution to it. Furthermore, it is castigated that family identity is not represented as a construct that resides in the minds of individuals but as co-constructed in action (Blumer 1969; Gergen 1996). This perception provides a lens for consumer analysis to focus on communicative practices instead of individual internal measures. Because of that, the studies of symbolic consumption activities and constitutive of collective identity have developed (Baxter 2004; Bennett et al. 1988; Carbaugh 1996; Curasi, Price, and Arnould 2004; Sandel 2002; Whitchurch and Dickson 1999; Wood 2000).

The early notions of family identity in marketing could date back to the late twentieth century. Belk (1988) first viewed extended self at the family level. But the term of family identity has not been applied to the conception of consumer research until Bates and Gentry (1994). They constructed the sense of family as how it transits from nuclear family to stem family. They find out that sense of family appeared in three ways. First, there was 'an attempt to hold on to vestiges of the past and preserve family structure' (Bates and Gentry, 1994). The second one is the 'need to go forward and seek a new family identity' (Bates and Gentry, 1994). Finally, holidays provided 'a bridge between the past and the future' (Bates and Gentry, 1994). All of these three are among relational bundles within the family. It is still lacking of elaboration, systematic definition and construction for consumer studies. In an extensive literature in family sociology, Reiss (1981)'s view of family identity was adopted by Epp and Price (2008) as mutually constructed, both internally among relational bundles within family members and externally in relation to the sense of outsiders based on observable family behavior" (Epp and Price, 2008). As well as self identity, family identity is the family as distinguished from other's and unique. It is important for situating the self within the social world and for communicating identity to the intended audience (peer group, government, descendants, etc.). Amber Epp's article of family identity has opened up

an entire area previously not directly studied by consumer behaviour scholar.

Epp and Price 's (2008) paper on family identity can justifiably be regarded as the forerunner to the research of family identity in consumer behaviour that viewed family as a collective enterprise instead of individually by concentrating on the interplay of individual, relational, and consumption practice. Thus, three particular components shared across families are identified by them to understand those interactions. They are structure, generational orientation, and character. 1) Structure indicates the boundaries of family membership now and in the past and the roles of family members (Bennett et al. 1988, 213). Specialists would agree that structure may varies and even negotiable through activities. Referring to Wallendorf and Arnould (1991) and Bates and Gentry (1994)'s researches which marked the changes in boundaries of family membership. 2) The generational component describes the transmission and continuity of family identity through generations over time (Bennett et al., 1988). In another world, the family is linked with its past and preserved in a future. Within the context of consumption research, limited studies have emphasized this component until contemporary times. For instance, viewing family photographs and storytelling through generations (Wallendorf and Arnould 1991; Blair, T. et al., 2009)), cherished possessions preserving identity from generation to generation (Price, Arnould, and Curasi 2000; Curasi, Price, and Arnould 2004; Moisio et al., 2004; Epp and Price, 2010), and intergenerational influences of consumption ritual of choosing brand (Moore et al. 2002). 3) To define the unique and special quality of the family as a collectivity, it is essential to address the family characteristics of day-to-day life (Albert, Ashforth, and Dutton 2000; Bolea, 2000). Although lacking in clarity and far from settled, scholars links consumer values to consumption attitudes, behavior, and activities (Burroughs and Rindfleisch 1997; Kahle, Beatty, and Homer 1986; Richins and Dawson 1992)

Although who belong to the unique collective identity may be various in different contexts and time period, the relational units can be applied by any of the three components. We identify the character of the relational units within the family by subgroups and their structure which can be revised. Family may have some subgroups

regard to generational orientation. Finally, relational units may define themselves independently using character descriptors differ from those used by the family as a whole or other relational units within the family.

The session shows that with the theoretical development of family identity more attentions has been paid to it. A strong focus is centered on Epp and Price (2008)'s article on family identity that shapes the far from settled previous notions There's a variety of component in family identity. Only three of them are highlighted that has gained more and more influence within recent years in consumer research. Because they have a large influence on identity creation. In this article, the focus is the locus of identity creation between new married couples, as individuals and as couples. Hence, how couples create a common identity through consumption practices will be scrutinized.

Chapter 2.3 Conclusion

Earlier works on self identity and family identity identified that they play a significant role in understanding consumer behaviour, but neglected to investigate and conceptualise the interrelationship between selves and family identity. Consumer research has recently recognized the importance on how family manage and construct their identity through consumption related experiences and events. but focuses on objects passed through generations within a family like storytelling (Price et al., 2000; Curasi et al, 2004) or only examines one important members of the family like mothers(Hogg, 2006) (e.g. Shankar et al., 2009). Previous research on how family manage and construct their identity have typically focused on either individual (Belk, 1988; Holt, 1998; Ahuvia, 2005) or collective (Kozinets, 1999; Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001) consumer identity formation.

The concern of how individuals influence and orchestrate family collective identity has been dominated by consumer research, although the variability of families which are

used to define themselves (Lutz, 2002), how individuals compromise to family identity during decision-making practices (Aaker and Lee 2001; Hamilton and Biehal 2005), family identity as part of extended self (Tian and Belk 2005). In summary, self also includes various levels of group affiliation, specifically individual, family, and subgroups which has extended the core self as and become more impersonal. These identities as part of the extended self to the extent are important to the group identity.

Chapter 3: Family in China

Chapter 3.1 Introduction

Having discussed family identity and ritual in literature, the significance of Chinese as consumers has now been put in context. China is one of the world's largest markets which has a large population. The Chinese are described as different kind of consumer from that in the West who are collectivist, situation-centered or holistic (Yang, 2009). As this research, I'll look at the construction and interaction of family and self identity in Chinese context. It is important to understand families in china and one child generation who has fall on the marriageable age. Compared with the elder generations in china which anchored in traditional Chinese values and operating from a holistic perspective, this first only child generation draws on a different consumption culture.

Chapter 3.2 Chinese Family

With the passage of time however Chinese family have undergone many changes. This section described family life in the perspectives of family structure and values through their transforms in the Chinese culture context.

Chapter 3.2.1 The changing of family structure in China

With the development of society and economy, China has changed greatly in recent years, including the changing of family structure. Especially after the government introduced the one child policy in 1979, the form of the family has had to adapt to the very influential change of the population control policy. According to the national wide population census in mainland of China, it is showed that about a quarter of families in China have only one child (Chen, 2004). As society has undergone great changes in politics, economy, culture and family policy implementation, Immigration, diversity, urbanization have become more common in the cities of china. The size of family has shrunk because of the sharp decline of the fertility rate, so the family composition has been reconstructed.

A traditional Chinese family generally includes at least two generations including husband, wife and children. Sometimes, three generations, four generations and even five generations may live under the same roof. Elder generation is often held in great esteem. However, along with social changes and development of economy and socialization, the main features of modern Chinese families have changed reflected on the size and structure. Compared with traditional Chinese family, it has been gradually transformed into families of simple structure and small size. The number of diversified patterns of families has been growing for example nuclear family. These changes are due to the introduction of the reform and opening-up policy, and to adapt to changes in the mode of social production and the style of life. Usually, the parents are responsible for housing and educating their children up until the time of the children get a job. Traditionally, when their children married, the newlywed couples would stay with the parents of the groom. Nowadays, once married, the children will move into their own homes. More and more adults are moving out, leaving their elder parents alone. It has found out by a nationwide survey that 23 percent of Chinese who are over the age of 65 live by themselves (China daily, 2003). Another research found out that less than 50 percent elderly females live with their children in Beijing (China daily, 2003). Even

many young couples now live with their parents, it is because the high cost of purchase a house or rent an apartment instead of the traditional Chinese culture.

Chapter 3.2.2: The changing of family values

The roles adopted by the members of the family in Chinese society have been greatly influenced by values. The influence of values on the family structure spanned from choosing a mate to dealing with your children. As Confucian values have a pervasive influence on Chinese behaviour (Gabrenya and Hwang, 1996 ; King, 1992; Lin, 1936; Tu, 2000).) Social order and communal behaviour was learnt by the Chinese through the philosophy of Confucianism. One of the important aspects of Confucianism is the family value. In traditional Chinese culture of the family, male adult as the maintainer, provider and protector of his family are the head of the family (Xie & Chen, 2006). This responsibility also endows him with complete authority and the final say in the affairs of the family. The family bonds are sacred and the family members are honored according to the seniority in the family. Although there are some aspects of the Chinese culture that are still the same, but most have changed. The survey of Chinese marital quality showed that the man of the house is no longer enjoying absolute control of the family. Husband and wife have the equal power in 52.6% of the family and 16.1%'s family women have the absolute control. Another change is the relationship between parents and children in the family. The statuses of children are increasing in today's Chinese family. The boundaries between children as subordinate and parents in upper position are not obvious (Xie & Chen, 2006). Children have more right to discuss with their parents. Specifically, the children are more or less free to choose the career they want to pursue but are required to consult their elders for advice. The other is that the importance of outsiders of the family who do not have kin relationship with the family members like friends, classmates and lovers is rising, although family is still be respected. Especially, friends may know more about the individual's emotional problem, love stories and social networks (Su, 2007).

The social connection of an individual to others is arranged by the closeness of their relationship not the kinship. This shows that the functions of family are reduced with the development of society. However, family is still play an important role for emotional communication, and individuals are still likely to share his or her happiness with the members of the family (Su, 2007).

Chapter 3.3 The Only-Child Generation

For the research of the individual identity of the newlywed couples through the consumption in Chinese context a selected group as consumer could not be ignored which belongs to the first generation of the one-child policy (born between 1980 to 1989). Because they are reaching the marriageable age now and according to Feng' s (2005) survey in 12 cities in China among young married couples, 40% of the husband or wife or both of them are the only child in their family. Furthermore, they play a vital role in Chinese market (Lu, 2000).

Chapter3.3.1 The Only-Child Generation

To balance the growth of population and to control the draining of the country's natural resources, a unique phenomenon of the Chinese family is the one child generation. The policy has been enforced by law in the country in 1979. Family living in rural areas and ethnic minorities are given some exceptions especially if their first born is not a boy. Nearly 40 years after the policy has been implemented, the effects are significant, especially on the prospects for women in society and marital relations between couples along with the status. Since the one child-policy implied in China in 1979, the Only-Child Generation (OCG) become a group of population not only new and unique in China but also unprecedented in human history (Nie, 2007). This generation played an vital role in their country-driven changes in consumption(Chen, 2010) .As they grow up in special social culture context and economic environment which tradition Chinese

culture have been challenged and the economy has rapidly increased, these experiences may nurture their values and consumer behaviour which as well be caused by the single child family format to some extent. Specifically, China's younger generations are the only child of the family, some parents may over-indulge them. A research in 1992 showed that 66.3% family spending was used on their only child in Beijing and 50 to 70 percent in other cities. Numerous attentions have been paid to understand them in anthropology, sociology, psychology, as well as in marketing.

Chapter 3.3.2 The Only Child as Consumer

Discussions of problems associated with them as being 'over-indulged, lacking self-discipline and having no adaptive capabilities are adjectives reduced' (Wikipedia, 2015), while the first generation of Chinese singletons who are born starting in 1979 and extending into 1990s are reaching adulthood and marriageable age. More studies have been done by Chinese academy to understand their characteristics as consumer. 1) The first is their attitude to information and the way they collect information for the decision making of consumption. With the contribution of information technology, this new generation is familiar with television, mobile phone, computer and internet. Those are all the means their parents are novel for their upper generations. As a result, they are more easily to receive the information from television and internet and influenced by them. They are more likely to accept new products and ideas. 2) The second is that they are more likely to be creative and express themselves. In another word, they are the identity seeker when they purchasing goods. That is caused by background they grow up which have no siblings at home, over-indulged. This is different from the traditional concepts of 'we', 'they' and 'I' which people will think of 'we' and 'they' first and then try to situate 'I'--- their own identities. They tend to the product which can represent their identity. They think about elements like fashion, special and new first instead of others like price. 3) Thirdly, they are hedonist they inclined to spent more money on entertainment. For example, clothes, information, social and high technology products instead of saving. For the consumption of services and product itself, they are looking

for excitement and pay more attention on the experience like travel and computer games. A survey made by an travel agency in Beijing in 2002 showed that 80% of the one child generation would like to travel to foreign countries for 1 week or 2, although it will cost around 10,000 Yuan which are much more higher than their monthly income. In addition, this generation of the one child-policy tends to spend their money in advance which is contrary to the conventional saving concepts. They are keen to credit card are in some extent not sensitive to promotion and price cut as traditional generation.

The last but not least, the significant influence of the 80s' characteristics on a family, or the whole society can not be ignored. First, usually Child proposed the demand of consumption and makes the decision. They play a leading role in the household consumption by influence their parents' decision (Qiu & Liu Siyang, 2010). Second, the 80s become the mainstream of the society. Not only because the number of this group is increasing, but also their demand and consuming capacity as they are now in their adulthood. Their identity and concept of consumption are as a consumer will have a major impact on the whole consumption market in China. They are now 20 to 30-years-old at the golden age for their career development, which not only means that they are gradually moved into the peak phase of income, but also into the "married, have children" and other important life stage. Third, they are going to have their own children (known as the second generation of the only child). The sense of their consumption will affect or even shaping the concept of the second-generation of the only child as consumer which have been mentioned in the last chapter.

In summary, the generation of Chinese singletons has high desire of personal satisfaction. They mainly use internet to collect data and choose the extraordinary products to show their identity without thinking of saving. Their sense of consumption has similarities with western consumer; at the same time differ at the psychological level. There is a huge contrast with the traditional Chinese consumer. Also, they have tremendous potentials on consumption.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

Chapter 4.1 Introduction

As mentioned earlier in the literature review, this study focuses on understanding the construction of family identity and how dose family identity interacts with self identity. This chapter is intended to outline and clarify in details of the research methodology which has been used to collect and analyze data to address the aims and objectives. The research program is designed to address the aims and objectives with the limited availability of resources. First, a brief literature review of the in-depth interview methodology which has been used in the research is explained, Second, a detailed explanation of the suitability of the method for this research is included, as well as the feature characteristics of the in-depth interview versus other primary data collection methods. Third, we summarized the limitation of this survey method for our research. Fourth, the details of collecting data are described from applying the process of the in-depth interview. Next, we describe details of the method for the analysis of the data. Finally, a conclusion will be given.

Chapter 4.2 Literature Review of Research Methods

There is a comprehensive discussion regarding research methods in the literature which has been widely applied in the social science studies. According to different purposes and audiences, diverse research methods need to be used correspondingly and carefully. The importance of methodology choice and design is well documented and is regarded as fundament to a successful research project (Ritchie, Burns and Palmer, 2005). Qualitative research methods which are most commonly used by consumer researchers offer useful complements to the study of consumer behavior. Narrative texts generated through in-depth interviews are one form of qualitative data that may provide useful

insights into cultural and personal issues that are otherwise overlooked by more structured designs (McCracken, 1988). This section presents a step-by-step process for how the data was collected by conducting the in-depth interview as research method. Furthermore, the advantages and limitations of the long interview and the suitability of this qualitative method will also be discussed.

Chapter 4.2.1 What is in-depth interview?

One of the most extensively used research method for data collection in social sciences is interview. A considerable growth of using interviewing as a method for social research has been witnessed in the 1980s, there was now generally agreed that interviewing is one of the key method for data collection. There are many disciplines and different types of interviews. Hitchcock (1989:79) summarized nine types of interviews: 'structured interview, survey interview, counseling interview, diary interview, life history interview, ethnographic interview, informal/unstructured interview, and conversations'. However, according to Cohen & Manion (1994:273)'s lists, there are four groups of interviews: four 'structured interview, the unstructured interview, the non-directive interview, and the focused interview'.

Semi-structured interviewing (also known as in-depth interview), 'is a type of interview which researchers use to elicit information in order to achieve a holistic understanding of the interviewee's point of view or situation; it can also be used to explore interesting areas for further investigation'(Boyce & Neade, 2006, p2). The process of conduct an in-depth interview are asking informants open-ended questions, and investigate any necessary effort to obtain data which meet the research's aim. As in-depth interview often involves qualitative data, it is also called qualitative interview. It is a research method to get a deep information and knowledge than in surveys, informal interview, or focus groups (Gubrium and Holstein, 2002). Gubrium and Holstein (2002:104) explained that it is a type of data collecting method focusing on "individual's self, lived experience, values and decisions, occupational ideology,

cultural knowledge, or perspective, general idea of the personality, skills, knowledge and communication abilities of the subject or applicant". In summary, 'in-depth interview is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation' (Boyce & Neade, 2006, p2).

Chapter 4.2.2 Why the long in-depth interview

As Gubrium and Holstein (2002) has noted in-depth interview is a form of understanding personal and cultural phenomena focused on individual's perspectives. Interview with family members can cast light on competing understandings of the family relationships. Therefore, this study has employed in-depth interview as a research methodology in order to collect data from the Chinese families.

According to McCracken (1988)'s view of individual interviews the long interview is a one-on-one interview devoted to understanding the cultural categories that characterize a respondent's experience. Unlike the depth interview, which tends to focus on individual affective states, the long interview focuses on shared meanings. It is a more streamlined and time efficient ways of achieving what anthropologists typically have sought through participant observation and ethnographic interviewing. Few social scientists have the time for these techniques in applied research and fewer still families would permit the intrusion involved. The long interview offers a solution that balances pragmatic constraints and research ideals. This echoes with one of main features of qualitative research which Bryman (2004) suggests of 'seeing through the eyes of the people being studied' in which an understanding is developing 'from the perspective of the people being studied' (p.279). Therefore, how we perceive reality as an interpretive ontology is to see that through the conversation from long interview (Miles & Huberman, 1994:4).

As Kvale (1983, p.174) defined that the qualitative research interview as "an

interview, whose purpose is to gather descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena". As a result, In-depth interviews are useful when detailed information about a person's thoughts and behaviors have to be explored in depth. In this research, we focus on the changes of family and individual identity over time and intended to find out the key events happened in a family relationship as identity drivers. In order to understand this social phenomenon, a research methodology which can explore the life story and perspectives on issues and event of the participants within the family life over time is required. In-depth interview as a form of data collection provides rich information which allows researchers to understand and interpret the construction and interaction of family and individual identity. Participants' response reflected on consumption, family activities or events in their family life helps researchers to discuss the construction and development of their individual and family identity in Chinese context.

By using in-depth interview, the respondent's point of view, feelings and perspectives of himself (herself), other family members and family events will be deeply explored. It is the primary advantage of in-depth interviews that it provides much more detailed information than what is available through other data collection methods, such as surveys. As a result, in-depth interview has been chosen as the method for this research. Furthermore, it also may provide a more relaxed atmosphere in which to collect information. Pitchie (2005, p.101) define the interview as face-to-face or voice-to-voice 'interaction following a question-answer format (stimulus-response) or an interaction more akin to a conversation. Interviewee may feel more comfortable having this 'conversation' about their family life as opposed to filling out a survey. In-depth interviews usually can offer deeper explanations than a questionnaire survey, while the later provides more generalizable characters from a population. Given the above understanding, this study applied the in-depth interview method.

Chapter 4.2.3. Trustworthiness and Ethical issues

However, there are a few limitations and pitfalls of this research method. Because of the validity and reliability, the trustworthiness of qualitative research has always been questioned compared with other naturalistic work. As the research focus on the personal life of the participants, they might want to protect their privacy especially the interviewer is a stranger for them. Their interview responses might be biased to the truth or for a number of other reasons. Every effort should be made to design a data collection effort, create instruments, and conduct interviews to allow for minimal bias as well as avoid ethic issues. Additionally, participants may try to construct socially acceptable identities during the interview because the special context and relationship between the interviewer and interviewee. Especially when the interviewer identity an issue participants has been faced or disclosing negative aspects or events, participants may want to present their identity in a positive way (Archakis & Tzanne, 2005).

When taking in-depth interview techniques, researchers also face challenge especially analyzing identity. Identity is a situational, dynamic and interactive process (Archakis & Tzanne, 2005; Watson, 2007). As a result, this idea makes it difficult for individuals' to accurately specify their identity at any point of the timeline (Archakis & Tzanne, 2005; Bamberg, 2004; Kraus, 2006; Watson, 2007). Many researchers criticized that whether participants can correctly identify their self identity (Bamberg, 2004; Watson, 2007) , as well as their family identity. Bamberg (2006) discussed that “narrative cannot be taken simply and interpreted solely for what has been said and told” (p. 141). He pointed out that inquiry questions about identity should represent a unique set of questions and special attentions should be paid to the interview process and the issues have aroused during the interview as well as analyzing identity.

Interview is a personal interaction and would include sensitive information about the participants. Researcher has made a clear and detailed note to every participant about the confidential of the data to avoid confusion. And everything information has been recorded has got the permission of the interviewees. The information which has is being recorded and interpreted will remain confidential to protect the participants. Participants have been given the information that their data will be used for research only and their

personal information and consent would be secured.

In conclusion, In-depth interview is a research instrument of choice to help understanding and creative insights of cultural scene, especially for the mental area of the individual when total immersion in the study is impractical. In another word, it is a qualitative method draws the understanding the insight of the informants without committing the investigator to intimate and prolonged involvement in the life and community of the respondent. In this section, we have described the research application of the in-depth interview in this study about family and individual interview. Nevertheless, we also have compared the strengths and weaknesses of the in-depth interview to other primary data collection methods.

Chapter 4.3 The Collection of Data

In this research, which emphasize the changes of individual and family identity consumer, conducted with 35 Chinese who have been married as informants to do the in-depth interview. They were identified through a network of friends and relatives. 10 of them are couples (5 couples). Both the husband and wife of each family were interviewed separately by the author. Except for one informant and a couple who was interviewed face to face, all interviews were taken through Skype or Tencent QQ (an instant messaging software service developed by Tencent Holdings Limited) and were conducted in Mandarin Chinese. While 35 may appear to be not a large number, this number is much more than the minimum recommended by McCracken (1988), and fewer interviews have been used successfully to interpret consumer experiences (e.g., Fournier 1998; Schouten 1991; Thompson1996). Each informant was told that this was a study of family identity and couple relationship, and each family received 10 pounds payment for participating in the study.

Chapter 4.3.1 Study site: Jinan

The research targets are newly married couples in Jinan, Shandong, China. Jinan is chosen as my data-collecting place because of the following considerations. I choose it because its large amount of couples getting married every year about 72000 (Ma, 2010). The other reason is that prior studies about china are usually focused on large cities like Beijing and Shanghai, Guangzhou. Only limited attention has been paid on middle sized cities such as Jinan which can still provide data about changes in urban China which represent the middle level in China which is majority. Jinan in Shandong Province's economy is above average level in mainland of china among 4 municipalities, 23 provinces and autonomous regions. The resident population of Shandong province is 936.7 million. It has the second largest resident population (National Bureau of Statistics of China) in China. GDP is the ninth in china which is RMB33, 62.132billion (about \$5, 6.036 billion) in 2010. Its per capita GDP was \$6,078 belong to Upper-middle-income area.

The informants including from newly married to those who have been married for more than 10 years. Crotty (1998) explains that the way of understanding and explaining 'how we know what we know' (p.3). In preparing for the study, I stated a clear position in line with Mead (1934), who conceived the notion of self as deriving from a social interactional stance. According to Mead (1934), a person is a personality because he belongs to a group or community, because he takes over the institution of that community into his own conduct. In particular in our case, the whole family as the group has interactions with the individual. Mead (1934: 7) argues that one way of understanding what we know is by involving in the interaction. Therefore, the notion of self 'me' is constructed via the acts of social interacting with the other members of the family (Mead, 1934).

McCracken (1988) suggests a four stage approach to conduct a qualitative study and analyzing its results. (1) Review of analytic categories, which means a literature review

of current concepts and generalizations. It has already been discussed in Chapter 2. (2) Review of cultural categories, where the investigator reviews his own "everyday knowledge" (Calder, 1977) of the topic. The next Chapter of Chinese context will provide a review of all the knowledge about the culture, the transferring society which the informants lived in. (3) discovery of cultural categories yielded by the interviews themselves, and (4) discovery of analytic categories which was conducted during the analysis and write-up of the interviews.

There is two main phases in the interview. First, it started by opening questions by asking the interviewees to introduce themselves. By doing so, brief information of their personal identity been partly captured through personality, temperament, aptitudes, skills, and talents. Also the interviewees will be relaxed for further questions and bring back some of their memories of their daily and marriage life. Secondly, the semi-structured in-depth interview with questions around the daily experience, family members, wedding ceremony and the whole marriage life experiences process have be implemented. Across interviews, special focus has been put on the experiences and how they make their decision of the consumptions form the family's identity. All the informants have been interviewed in person over a 3-month period (date through date). The 5 couples have been interviewed separately. Participants were recruited from family relatives and friends of the author, but none of them have been known by the author before. The face-to-face interviews conducted by the author have be hold in the house or flat where the participants live or in public place which makes them feel more comfortable. It will last from about 40 minutes to 2 hours. The interviews were semi-structured and conducted according to the stages advanced by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

The aim of this study is to better understand the relationship that exists between self-identity and family identity through consumption practices and activities basing on Epp and Price (2008) and making unique empirical contribution in the Chinese context. As we discussed in chapter 3, this research will focus on the early stages of the family life cycle which are 'young married' and 'full nest'. Therefore, informants who has just got married or married within 15 years with no child or with young children (age between

few months to 9 years old) will be selected, which is the second or third stage of family life cycle. They are between 20 to 50 years and most of them around the age of thirty. Two of them have been divorced before has asked as the families he or she used to have through the previous marriage will influence the new family identity. Therefore the question about the status of the marriage had been added to the personal information part in the form in the appendices section.

The incomes of the informants were justified based on the local living standards and the current Individual Income Tax (IIT) rate in China. According to a report by a Human resources department in Shandong the average monthly pay rate in Jinan is 3873 Yuan in 2013 (Wo, 2014). And the personal income tax exemption is 3500 Yuan per month according to the Individual Income Tax (IIT) law and there are 7 levels of the taxable income (Deng and Guo , 2008). Therefore, we grouped the monthly income into 5 groups which is under 3500, 3500-5000, 5000-8000, 8000-12500 and over 12500 Yuan. Except two of them has an income over 12500 Yuan, most of the informants fall into the second and third group which belongs to the middle class and only two of them has an monthly income under 3500 Yuan. The occupation of the informants is various covers more than ten different industries including medical, IT, social service, etc. According to the incomes and occupations of the interviewees, the data offer a cross-section of Chinese society but also focus on the group who lives around the average level.

Chapter 4.3.2 Skype interview

In-depth interview can be done in several ways, of which face-to-face interviews are the most common. Besides Face-to-Face (FtF) interviews, interviewing by telephone is popular too. But also interviewing using the Internet is rising and was recognized as a scientific process of research inquiries. This research proposes using VoIP (Voice over internet protocol) to make in-depth interviews and examine why it was chosen.

Since the development of internet, the communication technology, there are many different ways to connect people all around the world. This change has broken the gap of distance and provided a new mode for data collecting. The major one is the use of the VoIP (Voice over internet protocol) to make research interviews which has been recognized as a scientific process of research inquiries (Cater, 2011). Skype is one of the most popular free Voice call and video chat application over the Internet Protocol (VoIP) system that allows individuals to make video or audio calls using a peer-to-peer network. Different from the traditional way that researchers traveled to meet each participant at an agreed upon interview site and do in-depth interviews face-to-face, Users can Skype from computer to computer or from a computer to a phone. It allows researchers to interview research participants anywhere in the world as long as the participant has access to a telephone or computer with a headset or webcam. This eliminates the need for travel and to find a private meeting location.

There are some advantages of using internet technology compared with the tradition ways. The use of VoIP technology method can give the opportunity to considerably reduce the cost of research interviews and allow a greater number of researchers to collect their own data easily, faster and at a low cost (Bertrand & Bourdeau, 2010). Not only it is a 24 hours online way of cutting the costs of making phone calls, but also it is possible to record video and voice calls. The advantage of this protocol in a face-to-face research interview is simultaneously to traditional interviews and it can be analyzed the same too.

For choosing methodology for a study, researchers must consider the authenticity, confidentiality, and trustworthiness of the data collected. There are two points that could explain the similarity of the Skype interview with the tradition face-to-face interviews and even more trustable. First, Schultze (2006) reported that individuals using Internet counseling reported they felt more comfortable communicating from home than in a counselor's office. In addition, Schultze reported the client felt 'subjective -protectiveness' or psychological anonymity. Thus, early research on the use of Skype for counseling suggests this format does not inhibit disclosure, and may even

encourage participants to be more open. Second, it is easier for the respondents to quit the interview by logout the session whenever they feel necessary.

As the development of technology, the coverage of interment connection has expanded into more area. Skype as a free installed program has offers researchers a cost-effective and time saving method. Researchers can easily contact respondents with video conferencing by it to conduct individual interviews around the world. Although in some way the ethical issues are still exist, this technology provide an practical tool to simulate face-to-face interviews without sacrificing the quality of data collections. Furthermore, standard qualitative ethical practices till can be used to limit the drawback of the interviews.

Chapter 4.3.2 Data Collection

In-depth interview techniques—that is, the interviews contained some general topics and open-ended questions. Following the process of in-depth interview, it begun with "grand tour" questions around the respondents' knowledge of their general personal information, their daily life and their personal stories. As well as, asking to describe the family where they were born. These represents one narrative form that plays a role in the construction of identity as family is one of the first places where people get a sense of who they are (Stone, 1988). Then, the courtship, engagement and wedding of the couples' stories of family and marriage life is asked. That also given the importance of the identity of the family the participants were born. After these questions, informants were asked their relationship to their partner, their perceptions of changes in personal and family identities, to recount details of their views about the key events that drive the changes, the difficult times in their marriage life, and how they overcome it.

In the course of data gathering, the first three the interviews is the pilot. The records were reviewed afterward regularly in order to guide and improve the future interviews (Schouten 1991). The results of the data collected via in-depth interviews may not

generalize to larger group because it couldn't represent the common of those who were not interviewed as this method usually implies a smaller sample compared with some other method. This improved the questions of the data collecting and the experiences of the researcher. After that all the interviews was conducted. All the data were recorded in order to be reviewed regularly in order to guide, but not necessarily restrict, the foci of future interviews (Schouten 1991). This improved researcher's familiarity with the data, thereby facilitating "meaning discrimination" and the expression of the essence of the changes of identity among Chinese families (Giorgi 1997, p. 246).

Interview data were examined for common themes across informants that categorized how the Chinese make sense of family and marriage, especially those aspects bearing on the changes of identity, identity negotiations, and the events on the role of driving the changes. This approach was based on the view that informants' family stories express themes by which conceptions about family identity are negotiated, through reflections on consumer behavior (Epp and Price, 2008). After the data gathering, multiple readings of the complete data transcripts were conducted before any analysis in order to facilitate the schematization at a general level of the data (Giorgi 1997). As Cultural analysis was used to interpreting data, it began with a close reading of the verbatim transcripts in the local language, in an effort to constitute our interpretations in a specific historical and sociocultural context (Dilthey 1977). Secondary information sources on the Chinese family were used as supplementary material to provide a broader understanding when interpreting the data.

Chapter 4.4 Analytic approach

Narrative research has been extensively used for qualitative research by analyzing stories or experience. Identity is constantly under revision and interactively renegotiated. As such, data collected by many methods represent only moments when the study takes place (Archakis & Tzanne, 2005). To avoid the change of identity and

approach the key events which affect the personal and family identity, we conducted narrative as the analytical approach. The open-ended questions asked during the in-depth semi-structured interviews are likely to elicit narratives (Riessman, 1993) and obtain details of stories and examples to chase back to their how marriage and personal life which can be put in context (Bylund, 2003). In order to find out what influence their individual and family identity, narrative method allows researcher to focus on significant portions or events in participants' lives (Freeman, 2006).

In his schema for analysis, McCracken describes a means of moving from the individual utterances in an interview transcript, to more general observations that encompass multiple utterances, and on to even more general themes revealed in the set of interviews, and how these relate to present knowledge. The sections on conducting the study contain a great amount of specific, practical, and sensible advice. The section on analysis is more thorough and more theoretically informed than what is normally found in marketing accounts of qualitative research.

As identity is narratively configured, Narrative research is the key to analyzing identity construction consensused among narrative scholars (Bamberg, 2004). Redman (2005) observed that "the stories we tell to and about ourselves in some sense construct who we are" (p. 28). Narrative researchers have argued that multiple changes of personal and family identity over time became important to identity development (Langellier & Peterson, 2004; Peterson & Langellier, 2006). Furthermore, the construction of identity through family activities and events is a dynamic process that occurs not only in individual and family level, but also in cultural levels (Archakis & Tzanne, 2005; Bamberg, 2004; Langellier & Peterson, 2004, May, 2004; Nelson, 2004). In this sense, the narrative analyze of the stories that were told during the interview both affect and reflect the discussion of individual and family identity.

Recently, an attention has been paid by narrative scholars to an argument among 'big story' vs. 'small story' to which represents the most beneficial approach to narrative analysis. 'Big story' means stories told during an interview which reflected significant

aspects of the participants' lives. On the contrary, 'small story' represents stories been told by participants during interviews which reflected their every-day life. There is a debate as (Bamberg, 2006; Freeman, 2006, Watson, 2007). In addressing our research questions, we considered mostly of the key events which is the big story without overlook the small story. Because this research focus on the identity interplay in family which the content of the stories are more important to study compared with the storytelling process which small story approach focused on. (Archakis & Tzanne, 2005; Bamberg, 2006; Freeman, 2003). In addition, scholars who studied identity are generally focused on big story.

However, one of the key criteria addressed by narrative scholars is that small story approach can also portray participants' identity rather than viewing identity as an interactive process (Bamberg, 2006; Watson, 2007). Freeman (2003, 2006) argued that by analyzing identity construction via small story can approach the content of the story by study the reflection on significant aspects of people's everyday lives. Thus, we examined how individual family members constructed their family and personal identity through reflection on their daily life. Especially, the meanings that emerged and impacted individuals' everyday lives away from the family will be identified.

Chapter 4.5 Summary and Conclusion

With an exploratory and inductive nature, this thesis aimed to investigate the development and transactions of family identity as well as the changes of individual identity. The key events that drive the development change and transit of identities, as well as the important context that impact it, was also examined. In order to consistent with research on family identities, this study conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews. Because it employs open-ended questions which are likely to 'elicit narratives' (Riessman, 1993) and help researchers obtain useful details and examples to achieved the research goal (Bylund, 2003). Participants reflected on significant experience, activities, person, possession or events in their lives (Freeman, 2006) in

order to focus on what influence their individual and family identity. As requested, in-depth interviews are used in this research to help to provide a history of behavior, highlight individual concerns, reveal divergent experiences and “outlier” attitudes of the participants’ personal and family life.

The data collection was concentrated on the process of in-depth interviews with totally 15 families in mainland China. This of data was then analyzed and presented as narrative studies. There were limitations of methodology design, which are discussed in details in this chapter before. It is acknowledged that this research program has its bias and shortcomings. However, there is no one perfect survey method existing. What can be done is to study problems and difficulties in advance, and try to prepare as sufficient as possible before the practical research is conducted. Given the resources available, the author was trying her best to overcome difficulties and succeed tasks throughout. In the next chapter, the transcripts of interviews will be investigated with discussions on the data materials.

Chapter 5: Analysis and Finding

Chapter 5.1 Introduction

Family as a vital unit for the analysis of consumer behavior and study the goals of consumer’s action and changes. According to Epp and Price (2008)’s article, an entire area of family identity which have not directly studied previously have been discovered. The study of family identity in this thesis implies the theories which follow recent trends of the self and extended self theories in this consumer research’s new area. The framework which Epp and Price set up moving the focus from the individual or household to the interplay of identity bundles in action. The interaction between those

relational bundles are genre that represents a resolution of the establishment, transition and shift of family and self identity. “Households, products, technologies, and brands are all nested within these relational bundles” (Epp and Price, 2008). In this research we study consumers as a family member’s self and family identity through their actions, experiences and goals etc. through the framework of Epp and Price (2008).

The findings in this Chapter have demonstrated how family identity was constructed and the importance of individuals participates in the co-creation process family identity. This work shows how family identities and self identities integrate with each other during the family development.

Stories represent ways in which people organize views of themselves, of others, and of the world in which they live (Bruner, 1990). The narrative approach to the study of identity follows recent trends in the social science which encourage researchers to interview people to collect and interpret the stories they tell about their lives. Our study of family identity shared a similar approach. Questions were phrased to prompt sharing of family related personal and family experiences, stories and ideas. Transcription of the around an hour audio-recorded interviews provide 330 pages of text. Categories and themes were refined by employing constant comparative method (Glaser and Strauss 1967).The author separately analyzed the data and then conferred, combined, extended and refined into analyses which provided good illustration of the major findings.

Grounded in the life stories of 5 couples and 30 individuals who have been married, the findings of this study present the complex process of the development of personal identity and forming a family identity. The meanings of personal identity and family identity from the informants’ accounts have been presented and interpreted within the contexts in which they are lived. These should be understood as individual as well as family members in within family life and everyday experience. Through my engagement with their stories, I have been seeking to understand the multi-layered process of how they have developed and negotiated their self identity for their family identity. In this chapter, the themes that have emerged from the informants’ narratives

are applied to the theories that have been reviewed.

This chapter presents the discussion of the findings from this research. As mentioned in the Literature Review chapter (Chapter 2), and in the presentations of the Chinese context in Chapters 5, there's lots of components impact strongly not only self identity but also the characteristics of their family.

Chapter 5.2 Self vs Family

Chapter 5.2.1 Changes of self identity

The concept of self has been used by many scholars to understand consumer behaviours in social society (e.g. Belk 1998;Tian &Belk 2005). It was noted in literature review that theories of self and extended self especially through the meaning of possessions could only view part of the family identity. This study focuses on different forms of family identity in the construction, co-creation and transition process as it changes all the time. This section follows Epp and Price (2008)'s study on family identity which offered a framework as theoretical implication for the study of internal conflict within family especially in decision making, consumer socialization, and person-object relations area.

The biggest change to me after marriage is that I am more relaxed and peaceful then before. I used to be an impetuous person. I liked to do everything as soon as possible and easy to get angry with anything annoying. My husband is the opposite; he is a very quiet, calm and peaceful person who doesn't talk much. But after we got married I find him became more open and have more confident than before. I guess that is because as a husband he has take more responsibility than before not only for himself but also for the family. I felt that if things happen he will fight to protect and get the right for the family. (Respondent F1)

I found my husband work harder than before. And he would have a thinks instead of buy things directly as a bachelor. We are saving, you know, we got debt and we are expecting a child too. (Respondent F2)

Similar phenomena have been found in many couples. The changes of individual characteristics in this way are quite common. Individuals as members of a family by participating and using their skills to interact within the family in order to achieve their life goals or more importantly the family goals. Through this process, individual identity has been changed to meet the need of the family and reconstructed with the family identity by developing new characteristics, accumulate new knowledge, experiences, and information. Furthermore, it also co-creates the collective resources for the family individually and collectively.

Confucianism has influence the social order and communal behaviour of Chinese family a lot. In traditional Chinese culture of the family, male adult plays the role of the head of the family who is the maintainer, provider and protector of his family (Xie & Chen, 2006). Although the survey of Chinese marital quality showed that the man of the house is no longer enjoying absolute control of the family. From respondent F1's answers we discovered that the couple still kept this traditional perception as the male and female plays different roles in the family. Not only F1 and F2 viewed her husband as the supporter and protector of the family, but their husband also realized their responsibility in the family and trying to transfer their identity to meet the requirement of their role in the family.

Chapter 5.3 Set up the bond of trust

In this context, trust plays an important role by setting up a base for the two individual to become one family. In contrast, although there are conflicts among the members of the family community due to different views and backgrounds, these conflicts can be solved. The contributions trust makes towards the development of family identity are

vitaly important. When the participants have been asked when they felt they are a family. The answers could be summarized as the moment when the couples set up the trust in their relationship:

I felt we are a family much earlier than we get married actually. (Respondent F3)

Since when? Is there any special moment or issue related to that feeling? (Researcher)

... I guess that would start from the time he gave all his monthly payment to me which is just a few months we've been dated. It's not much, but that's all the money he had at that time. At that time I felt he trusted me so much that he treated our relationship seriously and he wanted to set up a family with me through all his heart. Er...I guess that is the moment I felt we are a family. (Respondent F3)

After a few months' dating, he proposed to me then I agreed. It's very simple. (Respondent F1)

Why so fast? (Researcher)

His sister is a very close friend to me. I met my husband through her. Although I have never met him before, we are like old friends. His first impression to me is that he is a very polite, honest, trustworthy person. And we have the same beliefs in religion I just felt that it is the right person. (Respondent F1)

Furthermore, trust also can be viewed as a necessary condition through which dominant members could exercise and make effects on the development of family identity. That member's power in the family helps to extend our understanding role that individual members play through both empowerment of the other members and setting up authority within the family.

I believe as a good husband should respect his wife very much. For most of the time when we have an argument I'll accommodate myself to her, because usually it would be about trivialities. But if it comes to big decisions like consumption of possessions, change career or moving house, we will discuss together. I'm good at gathering

information and compare price. For example, when we need to buy important or expensive possessions, Rose would trust me of my professional skills and knowledge. If we really can't agree with each other, we would flip a coin.

Did you do that before?(Researcher)

Only once. There are two properties in different area of the city which we can't decide which one to buy. We prefer different ones. We discussed few days, but still could persuade the other to make the final decision. Finally, I suggested that we will flip a coin to be fair. You know what? I win. haha....(big laugh) We found out that flat is the right choice later after. (Respondent M3)

We found from the answers of respondent M3's answer that the husband and wife have the equal power in the family decision in consumption, sometimes the husband even compromise to the wife. It is different from the last chapter which couples have the traditional male-dominated family. Research has showed that 52.6% of the Chinese family husband and wife have the equal power and 16.1%'s family women have the absolute control (Xie & Chen, 2006). It has showed that cultural tensions as traditional vs. modern are exist in a transitional society. Today Chinese traditional culture meet with global culture introduced through media, information technologies, and global companies (Ritzer, 2004). Through the decision making of the consumption, family as a collective enterprise indicates these tensions.

Chapter 5.4 Manage conflict and argument

Chapter 5.4.1 The conflict between self and family

The big difference of my life before and after I got married is that I'm not that free to make decisions anymore. No matter what it is, I have to put my family in front of myself. I can't hang out with my mates that often as I have to consider my wife who will be alone at home. You know there's so much different between a bachelor and a married

man. (Respondent M4)

After dinner, Most of the time, I feel really tired even don't want to talk much. I'd like to sit on the couch watching TV like most family guys. My wife will do some housework at that time and she knows that I'm tired and just want to relax, so wouldn't bother me much. You know, at that time in this particular area of the room, I feels like my personal place. (Respondent M5)

As setting up a new home and installing our possessions there, installing possessions that embellish, announce, and impose our extended self on it is a key possession ritual (Belk 1988, McCracken 1986) In this study we find that newly married couples instead of focus on the extended self, they prefer to set up a new image of the family which across-generation and financial situation plays an important role in it. A number of valued possessions, both functional and expressive, served to sustain and bolster people's social level and sense of competent have been bought brand new to be put as the new family possession. On the other hand, personal identity and family identity has interacted with each other in time and space. Respondent M4 felt that his desire to personal time and consumption has to compromise to his family. In M5's case, the sofa and that area around it can be referred as self-defining and self-expressive carrier. This material object or places are associated with the consumer.

His (Respondent F6's husband's) family got a spare flat which would be gifted to us as our new home. I'm not quite happy with the location but as the price for a property is very expensive in China we thought that we could accept it. But I have to be in charge with the refurbishment and redecoration, although I did not pay for the flat. That's what I think about as we engaged. I would like to have a home which will decorate according to my taste. But we got some problems for the furniture as the style which I prefer is more expensive. (Respondent F6)

At the beginning I insist do not do any decoration of the house or just do it very simply as I thought it is very small only enough for two of us to live. We would definitely move to another place few years later. It would waste the money. But my wife Rose and her

family strongly insist to give it a good decoration as it would look like a brand new home. Finally I have to agree with them. And in fact, I was right. We didn't live there very long. (Respondent M3)

Those couples in China especially those newly married ones were acutely aware that those possessions which has a strong attachments with them will show them self and their family identities. In Belk's (1988) formulation of the extended self, tools and weapons were used to illustrate possessions that literally extend self and thereby enhance physical performances. In the marriage family context in China, we found that certain self-extending possessions involve an expansion of the family the husband or wife come from. Those possessions like household, cars, household appliances, furniture, decoration of the house and even the size and style of their wedding.

Chapter 5.4.2 Communication skills

Communication skills have to be developed as two people come with their own values and beliefs to get married as a family that both of them must feel heard in order to thrive the new family. Differences need to be acknowledged; otherwise they will merge or one partner will be unheard. Or one partner may dominate and the other disappears. When the informants been asked how they deal with the conflicts and argument, it always come to understanding each other. The communication forms various in different family. Through various routines and communicative acts, to understand family identity, Epp and Price (2008) pointed out that researchers have to look at everyday interactions of family members.

At the beginning, when we just moved in to live together, I found that my wife is not keen at doing housework which is not as I expected. But I understand that she doesn't like it and her family really spoiled her for not let her doing those kind of thing. Time goes by I just started to take over all the housework which is not a problem at all. And she really enjoyed my cooking skills. And she's very thoughtful as she would help to

wash the dishes. (Respondent F8)

Both my wife and my son are family person. They really like to play computer games at home in their spare time. But I'm a more outside door person. I'm trying my best to persuade them by emphasising the benefit of the outdoor activities and ask them to take part in some sports. Although it does work some time, but not always. I think I just need to communicate with them more and they do realize it is good for their health. (M12)

Chapter 5.5 Structure

Grounded in the life stories of 5 couples and 30 individuals who have been married, the findings of this study present the complex process of the development of personal identity and forming a family identity. The meanings of personal identity and family identity from the informants' accounts have been presented and interpreted within the contexts in which they are lived. These should be understood as individual as well as family members in within family life and everyday experience in non western culture. Through my engagement with their stories, I have been seeking to understand the multi-layered process of how they have developed and negotiated their self identity for their family identity. In this chapter, the themes that have emerged from the informants' narratives are applied to the theories that have been reviewed.

Structure indicates the boundaries of family membership. This component emphasizes whom to include as members of the family. Three features have been observed and outlined from previous researches (Epp, 2008; Arnould, and Price, 2004; Bates and Gentry, 1994). Firstly, structure reflects the boundaries of family membership not only in the present condition but also in the past (Bennett, 1988). And the boundaries of family membership vary from time to time (Arnould, and Price, 2004). Secondly, the hierarchy and roles of family members have been revealed through structure. Thirdly, structure is negotiated and instantiated through consumption activities among other

activities. Some participants indicated all the three features of the structure. For instance, family boundaries are reflected in Respondent F11's interview:

QMXX: I don't have an elder brother whom I have always want to have. I only have an elder sister, so I got a brother in law. He has abundant of social experience. He has been working in different jobs and has lots of friend in different area. So I treated him as my elder brother whom I'll go for advice when I'm not sure about something or in trouble. He helped us a lot when we are preparing our wedding and asked his friend who's a wedding planner organized our wedding.

The hierarchy and roles of A11's brother-in-law has been revealed through consumption activities among other activities. The boundaries of family membership vary from time to time. When A11 was preparing her wedding, his brother-in-law has been considered as an important member of the family, as well as purchasing a car. Her brother-in-law was included in the family during the activities as ritual and consumption. The rest of the time he's not consider as member of the couple's family. Similarity has been found in F11's interview:

F11: My twin sister live with me now after she divorced. We are always very close.

Interviewer: Do your husband mind that?

F11: The three of us are very close, because we are classmate in senior high school and be trained in the same team as professional athletes in runner's society. We played together a lot. my sister and I sometimes like to tease my husband for fun. The three of us went out together a lot before we got married. Actually, my sister got married earlier than us. At that time, I'm really sad.

When my sister just got a divorce, I had the idea to invite her to live with us. My husband said that my sister would be very welcomed, because she could look after me when he's not at home. My husband works in a town a bit far from the city we live and have long hour shift, so most of the time he's not at home or come back very late at night. When my sister moved in, I'm so happy that I could have her as a company and she could look after me especially I'm pregnant now. Also, I feel more secure than

before. At that time, I was alone at home.

A11: When me and my husband have an argument, my sister always told me that my husband treated me so nice that you'd better forbearing those tiny matter which are not really important.

In her case, her twin sister plays a very important in her personal life as well as in the relationship between her and her husband. She and her husband seems treated her twin sister as a very close family member especially when she moved in to live with them. The twin sister as a member changed the boundaries of family membership. When the couple just got married, the twin sister is not included in as family member. Husband (F11's husband M11) and wife (F11) are the member of the family. The twin sister was still close to them but not as close as she moved in later. She became the member of the family when she moved in which is in present condition.

Structure has been instantiated through this case, the twin sister moved to their house marked the changes in boundary of their family membership. It is as similar as taking family portrait after divorce is a symbolic activity shows the change of the structure in Bates and Gentry (1994)'s research. As Epp (2008) mentioned in her research, family structure has been negotiated through activities, especially consumption activities and family ritual. However, not much has been mention about other activities and what kind of activities. The changes of family identity has not only recognized by F11, but also her husband by his attitude to his sister-in-law. In addition, the hierarchy and role the twin sister plays indicates that she has been included in as an important member of the family. She looks after, accompany the interviewee and mitigate the tense of the conflicts between the husband and wife.

Chapter 5.6 Family Identity Bundle

In this case, the sister as a surrogate in F13's family, she is the wife's twin sister who moved in their house and at that time their relationship was shifted from the role of the

sister in the family shifts from an outsider to an insider due to the absence of the husband. When the husband is not at home the wife's sister plays the role of the husband as taking care of the wife, especially when she's pregnant.

Story 2: The relation between their family and her husband's family (in-laws)

F13: few years before we got married, I was just at my third year of my university. I went with my husband (he was my boyfriend at that time) to his hometown to visit his parents on summer holiday. But his dad was very ill. We didn't know it was that serious before we went there. And soon his dad passed away. It was so sudden that I was shocked. His relatives begged me to play the role of my husband's wife at the funeral-as pallbearer which only close family member can be accepted to do so. Because my boyfriend is the only son in the family and to make family side of the funeral looks better. I was very young at that time and do not have any experience like this at that time. I couldn't refuse them, so I accepted. My husband's family treats me very well at that time; I really feel I was accepted as a member of the family.

In this story, the father's funeral as a ritual practices indicate the new member of the family. As F13 has been participated and played the role of the daughter in law before get married, the funeral indicate that the family embraced her as a new member. Ritual practice is the central for this revising of family bundles. If F13 has not been caught by the funeral, she would probably only be accepted as the son's girlfriend which would not been considered as a close member of the family at this stage. Because of the father's funeral, she has been invited and participated in an important role during the

funeral. On the hand, the family does have the choice of not asking her for that specific role. The father's death set a new challenge to family to consider the membership of the family and the boundaries of it. Other family member must have already considered F13 as a member or feel really close to her. Or else, they wouldn't propose the request. On the other hand, it is possible for F13 to refuse the request. This request possibly would have made her reconsider her relationship with her boyfriend's family and more likely her relationship with her boyfriend at that time. She may found out that she do love her boyfriend very much and has a strange relationship with him. And even potentially consider him as her future husband. Therefore, she accepted the request because she would like to strength the relationship with her boyfriend and be closer to his family. As a result, the story is a very good example to indicate that ritual plays a symbolic role in outline family boundaries. In this case it marks the new membership of the family.

With the development of society and economy, China has changed greatly in recent years, including the changing of family structure. As society has undergone great changes in politics, economy, culture and family policy implementation, immigration, diversity, urbanization have become more common in the cities of China. F13 lived in the city but her husband's family lived in the country side where traditional culture has been kept. She (F13) accept to play the important role in the funeral not only respect traditional culture of her husband's family, but also respected the relatives usually the elder generation in the family who asked her. Influenced by Confucianism, elder generation is often held in great esteem. Compared with traditional Chinese family, the structure of the family has been gradually transformed into simple and smaller size. Nowadays, once married, the children will move into their own homes. However, the funeral as a ritual event delineates boundaries of the family and indicates the family membership.

Chapter 5.7 Conclusion

According to the analyze the data, we had a better understand of the relationship that exists between self-identity and family identity basing on Epp and Price's (2008) framework of family identity especially in Chinese context. Consumption practices and activities represent performances that create tensions between self and family identity. They are also indicate the tensions in family between global and local, tradition and modern, urban and rural in a transitional society in non western culture. The tensions that exist within family consumption provide unique opportunities to better understand the expression and repression of different identity forms. This chapter demonstrates how the key elements emerge through the collective interactions of family members and how struggles over the difficult or important time during family identity development. The findings have demonstrated that how individuals participate in the creation process of family identity. In detail, this work shows how individuals employ their skills, resources to participate and interact within the family in order to set up a family identity which are not only did by individually but also collectively. Through this process, individuals' identity was changed and developed as well as family identity. We highlighted the co-constructed relational roles of the two individuals (husband and wife) in contrast to research on only one individual situated in family identity construction at the early stage of family life cycle. Further, our research contributes more potential for further analysis of family identities in non-western culture.

Chapter 6: Limitations

There are some limitations to this study which need to be acknowledged and explained.

These limitations can be identified with the method and context of this study. Long

interview was devoted to understanding the cultural categories that characterize a respondent's experience, special knowledge and insights of the topic under study. Although McCracken (1988) has noted, data from open-ended long interview can identify individual or personal details, there are many limitations of it. First of all, the long interview research method is poorly suited for generalizing results to a population. Not like quantitative study often include drawing large sample sizes selected randomly that enable the researcher to generalize results to a known population, this research reached a low numbers of completed interviews and the purposive selection of households for study.

McCracken states the qualitative clearly is an instrument in qualitative research which contribute to the study of our understanding in self. However the investigator has to pay attention to the relationship between investigator and respondent. The need for the investigator to manufacture distance, and the nature of the investigator-respondent relationship as it may be conceived by both parties. There are a great many individuals practicing qualitative research who began with bad training and who have devoted their careers to tightening the limitations this training has put on their powers of observation" (p. 6). As the two participate of the conversation during the long interview, the interviewer could affect the answer of the informants without notice. Although the interviewer tried her best to avoid the affect, there's still been some limitation about it.

Unlike the depth interview, this research which tends to focus on individual affective and shared meanings which long interview focuses. Compared with other method It is a

more streamlined and time efficient way of achieving what anthropologists typically have sought through participant observation and ethnographic interviewing. As McCracken points out, few social scientists have the time for these techniques in applied research. It is a rather time-consuming method compared to other method like questionnaire or mall intercept methods. Contact time, travel time, interviewing time, and answering open-ended responses usually result in four to six interviews per day, the upper limit of a long interviewer's typical day in the field. For each completed interview, data interpret, classification, process analyses can require 5 to 10 times the amount of time needed to analyze of questionnaire and mall intercept survey data. However, this dissertation does not intend to include demographic data in the analysis; instead, it has emphasized interactions and development of personal and family identity. From these informants who participated the interviews, this dissertation has narrated and analyzed the individual experience and family development, it focuses only on how individuals engage in the collective process of family identity.

Observation has been considered as another method to use for this study at first but only few families would permit the intrusion involved for their privacy. The long interview offers a solution that balances pragmatic constraints and research ideals. However, some family issues and personal experience may be viewed as shameful behavior to avoid providing to the researcher (Richardson, 2004). For example, two of the informants refused to talk about their relationship with their mother-in-law. There may be more information be hidden without notice. Therefore, it is difficult to find the date for the relationship and the influence of the in-law family. In this respect, how the family is

anchored in its past and preserved in a future, and what interactions define the character of the family has been limited because of it. Although it is acceptable in the ethical level, It is essential for distinguishing this collectivity as special unique for addressing the character of the family (Albert, Ashforth, and Dutton 2000). However, these interviewees have provided an example for researchers in methodology to study.

Moreover, this dissertation has focused only on the family from different class in a middle sized city in china which relates to a particular typical non western context. These issues raise the concern of generalising data from one city in north east of China, however, using the finding to another place in non western culture may have different settings. Therefore, applying the findings of this dissertation to other types of culture or society requires careful consideration. Additionally, it is realised that the relationship between the interviewer's family (husband and wife) and the extended family which is blurred in as much as mentioned in the finding chapter often play an important role at the different level of formatting and developing identity in many families.

Moreover, families tend to have a strong relationship with their in-law families kinship in Chinese culture community. Therefore, studying the case of Chinese family identity in those few families in the data may illustrate a limitation for applying such a methodology to other products or services because the relationship between these families of other types may be viewed as being characterised by the different roles in different community. Thus, this dissertation has placed utmost emphasis on the family identity development beyond the marketplace in as much as there is no culture exchange. Moreover, it has also focused on the roles of individual family members

within the family identity creation process in order to understand how family identity develops rather than what family identity the family has.

Another limitation of this dissertation is the understanding that it provides strong evidence of the unchanged nature about some personal identity. There may be a disadvantage of the data in this area, because the method of long interview has limitations. The interviewees explain their own views about their personality and experiences. The objective fact couldn't be found out. Furthermore, according to McCracken (1988) that only a few long interviews need to be conducted, "no more than eight" (p. 37). However to avoid the limitation emphasis on shared meanings in a more general population, the researcher tried to do more interviews than he recommended to reveal the presence of such differentiation.

The difficulty the researcher may meet is that Chinese participants are usually tended to be neutral in their answers with a high percentage of 'I don't know' answers in the returns because they are influenced by social norms (Yang, 1997). Furthermore, participants have an inclination towards the questionnaire instead of evaluating questions individually. To reach the emotionally layered consumers who have an unconscious mind, photographs, videos, diaries and secondary data are used for the study of the familial identity in the consumption. As the information collected by the approach like photographs, videos, observation and secondary data will abundant and increase the credibility of the data. The reason is that they are less vulnerable to subjective and emotional factors. For using the observation method to collect more

detailed information about the couple's daily life, the following interview will be benefit. As the questions interviewer asked will be more targeted which can effectively reduce the number of time to get 'I don't know' answer from the participants.

In addition, a targeted for explaining the diary keeping procedures to the respondent and a concluding interview may be used to check on the completeness of the recorded entries. Butcher (1990) explained that diaries are used to record the behaviors occurring over the diary period (For example, in this study the wedding preparation period) and collect additional background information about the bride and groom. An interview is important for explaining the diary keeping procedures to the respondent to check on the completeness of the recorded entries (Hilton, 1989). Often retrospective estimates of the behavior occurring over the diary period are collected at the final interview (Hilton, 1989).

In conclusion, this study only employed participant by using long interview because it is difficult to access family members in the offline world. Many community members declined to observe in their daily life environment, but they were happy to answer questions through interview. It was difficult for me to gain face-to-face access to members because I was not known personally by them. In contrast, the online interview through Skype is a place where it is normal for strangers to interact. During the data collection process, I received greater cooperation from them. I have maintained a low profile on the personal data of the informants in order to remain unobtrusive and gain a more natural data set. Moreover, I made use of personal messages in order to gather

additional data from some interviewees.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This dissertation has demonstrated the formation of family identity through the study of consumer's consumption practices in China based on Epp and Price (2008)'s framework. The findings of this dissertation may pursue a generalization issue with other non-western culture because of the similarity of culture background. However, this study only focused on families in north east of china to the extent that middle class consumers employ to construct family and personal identity within a transforming society. Moreover, the dominant informants of the data are female. Therefore, further research should be done to extend our understanding of a family's identity, as a unit through various negotiations of individual and group identities especially in the view of gender issue. Furthermore, future studies are needed for contracting family identities which focus on different rituals and experiences in other non-western society.

In order to extend our understanding of the formation of family identity through the notion of family members (Cova and Dalli, 2009), further research is necessary to demonstrate how members construct family identity and how it changed. Future research may be enriched by employing different concepts such as gender, brand, different culture context, or spirituality to understand family members' behavior as consumers. Because constructing new definition of community is not the main objective of this dissertation, the discussion of every interviewees' family is not discussed in details both theoretical and empirical discussions. Therefore, further research may

extend our understanding of them by extending our inquiries to different families' variety in their performances of some forms over others. However, further research may also focus on understanding how we can analyse the credibility of a large number of long interview data because most data was gathered from this method. For example, it might employ the notion of understanding how interviewer can control the credibility and trustworthiness of informants as strangers.

Moreover, regarding to the transforming culture in Chinese society in this dissertation, further research may explore families by observing family activities to investigate whether there is reacts against the development of family identity. Which means further research could place on the understanding of how family members' self identity and family identity interact through their every of life.

One issue emerging through the understanding of the conflicts among family members. As mentioned earlier, some members of the family especially in extend family may be confident that they have more decision making power than others because they are the upper generation or have a higher social status or are the main income earner of the family. In contrast, some members may would like to gain more power of the family. This provides further direction of research for investigating what relates to the authority of the family.

Another issue of further research is investigating how family identity was influenced the relation a larger community level. Further work could place on the conflict between the

family and the development of the society to understand the sociology power of the society. It may extend to a much further level.

Given the nature of my research, this dissertation aims to develop rather than test theory. Therefore, further research should be done on the quantitative methods for testing the theory of family identity interplay in daily life and ritual practice. For example, it might be interesting to investigate the level of consumption practice or consumer roles. It might also be extended to investigate the casual relationship between family members and families. Moreover, it would be fruitful to employ more interviews in different cites as an additional form of data collection in order to improve our understanding of the interplay and formation of family identity and how individuals engage themselves in it.

Appendix

Appendix1 Interview Questions

Thank you very much for your agreement to take part to this interview. The questions are about your marriage life and your relationship with your husband. All the information will be used for academic study only. If you change your mind anytime during the interview please feel free to drop it. It will take about 45 minutes. I'll record it. Is that ok? Do you have any questions? OK, I'll start with some questions about yourself.

Questions:

Personal Story:

1. I want to start off by talking about how you think of yourself as a person. How would you describe yourself? What do you consider to be your strongest characteristics?
2. Do you share the same characteristics as your family? (i.e. mother/ father/ grandparents)
3. How long have you been married?
4. How would you describe your partner? How would you describe him/ her? Do you think he/ she is similar to parents/ grandparents?

5. Do you think you and your partner have something in common? Is there any changes of that after you have been married?
6. Do you have children? (if yes) How would you describe your child? In which part do you think he/ she is similar to you? In which part do you think he/ she is similar to your partner?

Courtship Story:

7. How did you and your partner first meet?
8. What attracted you to your partner?
9. When you first started dating what was that like?
10. Do you and you partner have something in common when you just started dating?

Engagement Story:

11. How/ when did you get engaged? (If woman) How did your husband propose to you? (If man) how did you propose? What you want to get at here is the story behind the engagement. What was it like? How did you feel?
12. How did your parents feel?
13. How did your partners' parents feel?
14. What was planning your wedding like?
15. What did you think of your spouses' parents?

Wedding Story:

16. Tell me about your wedding.
17. What kind of family identity you want to show to the participants of your wedding? (Size, food, number of guests, location, dress, speeches; video's; theme)
18. Did your wedding meet or exceed your expectations? How or in what way?
19. what's your favorite part of your wedding? Why?
20. who's involved in the wedding planning process? Which part and how?
21. Did you have any troubles with your family members when planning the wedding? How did you solve them?

Marriage Story (or post wedding story):

1. Could you describe your daily life? What do you do in your spare time? How about weekend or holidays? Is that changed since you have been married?
2. What were the expectations of your marriage before you got married?
3. When do you feel you are a family?
4. How would you describe your relationship to your partner? How?
5. Do you think you have changed since you have been married? How?
6. Do you think your life have changed since you have been married? How?
7. Do you think your partner has changed since you have been married? How?
8. Do you think your parents have changed since you have been married? How?
9. Do you think your partners parents have changed since you have been married? How?
10. Is there any difficult time you met during your marriage? How did you overcome it?
11. Is there any special time or event that changes the life of you two?
12. If your family were a person, who would it be?
13. Do you have any plan about your family life in the future?

Table 1 Profile of the key informants

	Name	Sex	Year of marriage	Income (Chinese Yuan)	Occupation	Age	Age of Child
Couple 1	F1	female	11	3500-5000	Worker	36-40	9
	M1	Male			Worker	36-40	
Couple 2	F2	female	7	3500-5000 8000-12500	Worker	31-35	None
	M2	Male			worker	31-35	
Couple 3	F3	Female	10	3500-5000 3500-5000	Hairdresser	36-40	2
	M3	Male			driver	36-40	
Couple 4	F4	Female	4	3500-5000 5000-8000	Nurse	31-35	6
	M4	Male			doctor	31-35	

Couple 5	F5 M5	femal e Male	8	3500-5000 3500-5000	Worker worker	41-45	6
	F6	Fema le	3	3500-5000	nurse	31-35	1
	F7	Fema le	5	8000-12500	manager	31-35	4
	F8	femal e	5 month	3500-5000	Sales assistant	26-30	None
	F9	Fema le	2	3500-5000	nurse	26-30	Pregnant
	F10	Fema le	30	5000-8000	doctor	56-60	None
	F11	Fema le	12	5000-8000	doctor	36-40	1(3mont h)
	F12	Fema le	14	5000-8000	Social worker	36-40	12
	F13	Fema le	4	3500-5000	accountant	26-30	3
	F14	Fema le	6 month	3500-5000	student	20-25	none
	F15	Fema le	Divorce once then remarrie d for 7 years	3500-5000	doctor	31-35	No child for the first marriage, the second marriage have a 6 year old

							daughter
	F16	Female	6	3500-5000	worker	36-40	4
	F17	Female	4	below3500	salesman	31-35	3
	F18	Female	8	3500-5000	worker	31-35	3
	F19	Female	4	3500-5000	receptionist	31-35	none
	M20	Male	1	3500-5000	salesman	31-35	none
	F21	Female	8	3500-5000	worker	36-40	6
	F22	Female	Divorce once then remarried the same person	3500-5000	doctor	36-40	none
	F23	Female	4	3500-5000	worker	31-35	2
	M24	Male	1	below3500	salesman	26-30	1
	M25	male	4	3500-5000	worker	31-35	1
	M26	male	3	3500-5000	salesman	31-35	2
	F27	Female	4	3500-5000	worker	31-35	3
	F28	Female	5	3500-5000	worker	31-35	3
	F29	Female	7	3500-5000	Social worker	31-35	5

		le					
	F30	Female	2	3500-5000	accountant	26-30	Few months

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